

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

GENERAL NOTES.

The Generic names of the Peccaries, Northern Fur Seal, and Sea Leopard.

Dr. Gill's ruling* about the names of the Peccaries surely introduces a very dangerous principle, which might carry us a great deal further than at first appears. *Tayassu* (1814) and *Dicotyles* (1817) each contain exactly the same species, and the later one should therefore be considered as a full synonym of the earlier. To permit any later restriction of the synonymic name to reinstate it as a valid one side by side with the earlier would be a plan quite opposed to the usual custom, and one fraught with the danger of much further disturbance to nomenclature.

Nothing is more likely to introduce confusion and doubt into nomenclatural decisions than any paltering with the good old principle of "once a synonym always a synonym."

Consequently I think Dr. Merriam perfectly correct in his contention that *Tayassu* and *Dicotyles* are strictly synonymous, but Fischer's *Notophorus* † introduces a new element into the case.

In giving this name, Fischer no doubt intended merely to replace his earlier but barbarous *Tayassu* by a classical term, but he happened to mention only one species as belonging to it, viz: "*Sus tajassu* Lin. Gmel."

*General Notes, supra p. 38.

†G. Fisch. Mem. Soc. Moscow, V, p. 418, 1817.

This therefore would not only be its type, but would by elimination restrict *Tayassu* and *Dicotyles* to the other species mentioned in the respective original descriptions of those genera. Dr. Merriam's *Oliosus* would thus not be required.

But while Linnaeus's *Sus tajacu* was the collared Peccary, Fischer's *Sus tajassu* was, as is clearly shown by the synonymy in his *Zoognosia*,* the whitelipped species, and that, therefore, must count as the type of *Notophorus*, and by elimination bring *Tayassu* on to the true *T. tajacu*. We should thus have *Tayassu*, Fisch.

Subgenus *Tayassu*, Fisch. (Syn. *Dicotyles*, Cuv.) Species *T. tajacu* (type), *angulatus*, *torvus*, etc. Subgenus *Notophorus*, Fisch. (Syn. *Oliosus*, Merr.) Species *T. (N.) albirostris* (type) and *T. a. ringens*.

Doctor Allen has taken the same view about the principle of full synonyms in the case of the Eared Seals, when showing† "that the genus *Otoes*, Fischer, 1817, is an exact synonym of *Otaria* Péron, 1816," and so far I fully agree with him.

But I would venture to ask if the principle on which the name *Callorhinus* Gray, 1859, is rejected ("preoccupied by *Callirhinus*, Blanchard, 1850") is not now an obsolete one, and should we not therefore adopt that name.

The logical outcome of the non-emendation system, nearly universally adopted in America, and now unreservedly accepted here by myself and others, is that unless two names are entirely alike, the earlier does not preoccupy the later, however closely they may resemble each other. Even if I did not go so far as in the case next following, I should still consider *Callorhinus* and *Callirhinus* as "permissible variants" of one compound, and each as valid as *Picus* and *Pica*.

The extreme of this principle is reached in the case of the Leopard Seal, now commonly, but for two reasons erroneously, called *Ogmorhinus*, (Peters, 1875).

Firstly, its original and still well-known name was spelt *Stenorhinchus* on its first publication in 1826,‡ and I hold that the name is not invalidated by the *Stenorhynchus* or *Stenorynchus* of earlier authors.

Secondly, it may be pointed out, for the benefit of those who might refuse to accept *Stenorhinchus* that Peter's *Ogmorhinus* of 1875, can in no case stand, as the genus had already been renamed *Hydrurga* by Gistel in 1848.¶

To recapitulate, I consider that the two subgenera of the Peccaries should bear the names of *Tayassu*, Fisch., and *Notophorus*, Fisch., the Northern Fur Seal that of *Callorhinus*, Gray, and the Sea Leopard, *Stenorhinchus*, F. Cuv.—*Oldfield Thomas*

*III, p. 285.

†Bull. Am. Mus. N. H., XVI, p. 116, 1902.

‡F. Cuv. Dict. Sci. Nat. XXXIX, p. 549, 1826.

¶Naturg. Thierr, p. XI, 1848.